

INTRODUCTION

It is the policy of the Lee County Library System to provide meeting room facilities for library activities and programs and to make these facilities available to community groups, organizations, and individuals for meetings of community interest without charge during normal library hours. Priority for use of library meeting rooms will be given to those programs sponsored or co-sponsored by the library. Permission to use the library meeting rooms will be given on a “first come, first served” basis. Permission to use library meeting rooms does not imply library endorsement of the aims, policies, or activities of any group, organization, or individual. The following regulations apply to all non-library sponsored programs or meetings conducted in Lee County Library System facilities.

The Lee County Library System subscribes to the Library Bill of Rights, as adopted and amended by the American Library Association, which includes the following statement:

“VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.”

The general provisions in the “Overview” of this policy cover the use of large meeting rooms, multipurpose rooms, designated small public meeting rooms, study rooms, and the sidewalks and/or grounds of the library. Please note specific requirements in this policy for each of these areas.

OVERVIEW

Programs not sponsored by the library must be sponsored by a NON-PROFIT group or organization with a designated member of the group responsible for the program. Commercial use of the library meeting rooms is prohibited. Individuals may apply to use a meeting room for non-profit purposes.

The library does not necessarily endorse the aims, policies, or activities of any group, organization, or individual that applies to use a meeting room or the library sidewalks or grounds.

All programs must be open to the general public, with the exception of certain city, county, state, federal or educational meetings. All programs must be in keeping with the Mission and Goals of the library. No admission fee can be charged, and no collections or donations can be taken. No sales of any type are permitted, except during library-sanctioned events sponsored by authorized support groups to benefit the library.

Advertised public meetings that are noticed and held in compliance with the Florida “Sunshine Law,” Chapter 286 Florida Statutes, may be videotaped and photographed in accord with that law. As to all other use of the library meeting rooms, except for photography or videography by bona fide news media representatives, no pictures or video of a meeting may be taken of those in attendance without the permission of those to be photographed or videotaped. (FS 540.08)

An adult must apply for meeting room use by any youth groups and must accompany them at all times.

Smoking is not permitted. No refreshments may be served unless approved in advance by the branch or regional library manager or designee. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on library property.

The number of people in the meeting room cannot exceed the Fire Marshal's standards. The group, organization, or individual using the meeting room is responsible for setting up the room and returning it to its original condition. This also applies to use of library sidewalks and/or grounds.

The group, organization, or individual will be responsible for discipline and reasonable care of the room, equipment, and furnishings. The applicant will pay the cost of replacement or repair of anything damaged in the room during the scheduled use.

RESERVATIONS

With certain exceptions, library meeting rooms may be reserved by non-profit groups, organizations or individuals for only one meeting at a time and no more than six months in advance. Certain city, county, state, federal or educational groups may reserve the meeting room for multiple dates for important meetings of immediate community interest, as determined by the library manager.

Application for use of the meeting room must be submitted at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. The Meeting Room Application form is available at all libraries with meeting rooms. Meeting rooms are assigned in order of the receipt of application. The library reserves the right to cancel any reservation for the meeting room. Notice will be given to the group as soon as possible, if cancellation is necessary. Groups holding a reservation are requested to notify the library of any cancellation on their part at the earliest possible date.

Study rooms, where available, do not require a meeting room application or 24 hour advance notice. The branch manager or designee may permit use of any meeting room for study or tutoring purposes without the required 24-hour notification.

Meeting Room B at Lakes Regional Library and the Conference Room at Cape Coral – Lee County Public Library may be reserved for one meeting each month in the current calendar year for official Lee County Government Board of County Commissioners Advisory Committees that are listed at www.lee-county.com under BoCC Agendas and Transcripts. These committees may schedule monthly meetings in December for the following year on a “first come, first served” basis.

SIDEWALKS AND GROUNDS

Definitions: Library sidewalks are the paved walkways that lead to the library entrance. The term “library grounds” in this policy refers to other paved areas in front of the libraries. The library does not permit use of landscaped or grassy areas on library property, except for certain library-sanctioned events.

No political campaigning or campaign signs are allowed on county property, except when the library is being used as a polling place. If the library is being used as a polling place, no person, political committee, committee of continuous existence, or other group or organization may solicit voters inside the polling place or within 100 feet of the entrance to any polling place, or polling room where the polling place is also a polling room, or early voting site. When the library is a polling place on Election Day or for Early Voting, campaign signs and campaigning are permitted on county property, but only if they are more than 100 feet from the library entrance.

The first amendment of the United States Constitution allows certain types of free speech on public sidewalks like the ones outside county libraries. The library does not necessarily endorse the aims, policies, or activities

of any group, organization, or individual who is using library sidewalks or grounds. Persons using the library sidewalks and/or grounds may not block the library entrance, impede access to the library, or harass library patrons who approach the building. This means that those using library sidewalks and/or grounds may not stand in the way of people who are approaching the building, call out repeatedly to them, or create any kind of disturbance in front of the library. The responsible party outside the building may set up a small table, as long as it does not block the library entrance or roadway. Signs may be affixed only to the table. Signs may not be affixed to the library building or anywhere else on library property. No fees or donations of any kind may be solicited or collected on library property. Solicitation is prohibited. No sales of any type are permitted, except during library-sanctioned events sponsored by authorized support groups to benefit the library.

Library staff will request basic information from those using library sidewalks and/or grounds.

HOURS

Library meeting rooms are available during regular library operating hours. Meetings should end on time and the room be left in the same condition as found. The room should be vacated at least 30 minutes before library closing time, unless other arrangements have been made with the branch manager. At locations designed to allow after-hours meeting room use, arrangements may be made for use of the room for one hour past the library closing time for a fee of \$100.00, payable in advance, contingent on the library being able to schedule personnel for the desired extra time. After-hours use must begin during regular library hours and end no later than one hour past the library's normal closing time. The fee is to be paid to the hosting library at least 3 weeks in advance of the meeting. Checks are to be made out to "Lee County BoCC." The fee will be used to cover the after-hours cost of personnel and restroom janitorial service. The fee will not be prorated for partial hours.

EQUIPMENT

The library is not responsible for equipment, supplies, or other items owned by a group or individual and used in the library. All such items must be removed from the library at the end of the meeting for which they are used.

Groups may request the use of library-owned audiovisual equipment, when available. Arrangements for the use of library-owned equipment must be made with the library staff when a reservation is made. The library reserves the right to deny access to certain equipment when staff is not available to oversee its use.

Groups using sidewalks and/or grounds may not use library-owned furniture and equipment, except for library sanctioned events.

PUBLICITY

The group using the meeting room is responsible for arranging its own publicity. The group may post a small sign advertising the meeting immediately before the program in a space designated by the branch manager. The library cannot provide program registration or detailed information about programs that are not sponsored or sanctioned by the library.

ADA COMPLIANCE

The Lee County Library System complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and makes every effort to ensure that functions held in its meeting rooms are fully accessible for persons with disabilities. Each library has an FM Assistive listening system for use by persons who have a hearing impairment. Check with the library before the meeting for instructions on its use. Publicity and announcements for the meeting must include the following wording:

“Sign language interpreter available with 5 business days notice to library staff;
Assistive listening system available; request at desk.”

Library staff will request an interpreter from the Deaf Service Center to schedule an interpreter, as per the above notice.

COPYRIGHT

Any group, organization, or individual showing a film/video/DVD in the library meeting room must adhere to the copyright law. Films/videos/DVDs must have public performance rights in order to be viewed in the library.

DENIAL OF MEETING ROOM USE

If permission for the use of a library meeting room is denied, the applicant may appeal the denial to the Library Director or designee. The ultimate authority for library policy rests with the Lee County Board of County Commissioners.